



Spuyten Duyvil

P R E S C H O O L

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

CALENDAR CHANGE: original school calendar listed Jan. 12 as a half day for staff development. This is being postponed until March. Jan. 12 will be a normal day of school.

- Family Conferences week of Nov. 27
- Open House for perspective families to SDP Wed, Nov 29 6-7 pm
- Parenting Circle with Laura Marte, social worker.....
 "Helping your children with their feelings"... Thurs, Nov. 30 9-10 am
- Kindergarten application processDec. 5 until Jan. 19, 2024.....
- Family Breakfasts3K Tues, Dec. 12..... 2S Wed, Dec. 13..... 2N Thurs Dec. 14
- Winter Break NO SCHOOL Mon, Dec 25 thru Mon, Jan. 1, 2024
 Return to school Tues, Jan 2, 2024
- DEADLINE FOR FLU SHOT DEC. 31 No return to school without this**
- Somos Artistas begins Monday, Jan. 8
- 3K/4K application process Jan. 10 thru March 1, 2024 .
- MLK Day NO SCHOOL Monday, Jan. 15
- SDP Board Meeting Wed, Jan. 17 7 pm Zoom
- Movie Nite for 4K Friday, Jan. 19 6 pm

Nov. 28, 2023

Dear Families,

My husband was a school principal too and he always told his staff, anything you haven't put in place by Thanksgiving, don't bother til next year. This year is already over. Boy, is that ever true. Luckily for us I remember that warning every September so we are fully ramped up. That is especially evident this time of year.

Our 4K Share Luncheon was a great success again last week. The children were so patient, kind, polite, sharing, friendly, not that they aren't always those wonderful things, but they all really shone passing around the foods.



We brought in pizza for 3K so everyone had a special share meal.

Hopefully that good feeling transferred over to all your homes over the extended weekend with family and friends.

FAMILY CONFERENCES – are under way right now. Teachers have prepared notes on your child’s strengths and goals they have for your child over the next few months. You have a choice of in-person or over Zoom. This was one of the better pandemic changes; both systems have their benefits for different families at different times. What is important though is that each family set aside 20 minutes to be focused on this important conversation. Please

do not be shopping or cooking while on the Zoom. Give this your full attention. All involved caregivers should ideally participate in the conference; your child is invited as well, especially when it is in the classroom. They love to have their parents in their space.



DOUBLE GOOD POPCORN FUNDRAISER –

Thanks to everyone who took part in this effort. Between the 4-day online pop-up store, the brochure sales and the direct donations the school banked just over \$6000, a respectable amount. Top fundraiser was Zhuri Blake and family. Congrats!

There is always time to donate to the school, especially before Dec. 31 to qualify for tax benefits (SDP is not-for-profit and I can give you a tax letter). Our Venmo is @spuytenduyvi, we are registered in Zeffy which will give you the tax letter directly and there is always the good old fashioned check to write!

KINDERGARTEN IS COMING! Dept of Education application process opens Dec. 5. This is for DOE public schools ONLY. Charter schools have their own application process which does not close until April 1 so you can leave those visits for now and just concentrate on the DOE programs that sound interesting to you. I am attaching my guide to District 6 and 10 schools again, along with a thorough timeline from Advocates for Children NYC. **There is no more automatic assignment to your neighborhood school.** Families MUST make applications through the MySchools system, just as you did for preK last year.



3K/4K APPLICATIONS will be next. Current 3K families only need to put Spuyten Duyvil down as your first choice but be sure to mark Current Student on the application. Of course, if you decide to make another choice for 4K that is up to you but remember that our seats will be filled by families that put SDP first. This process does not open til Jan. 10 so there is plenty of time. I won’t let you forget!

LENDING LIBRARY-



4K children are bringing home beautiful new Book Baggies every week with another selection of books for you to read with them. I add a Reading Tip for Families every month. November is about doing a Picture Walk with your child before actually reading the words together. We have books in Spanish also.

This is an important Literacy piece of our curriculum as well as setting up healthy routines for your family as big school gets closer and closer. Parents often ask when their child will start reading. Well, that process began the day you spoke your first words to them and continues with every conversation you have, every question you answer (or have them think about themselves), every sign you help them recognize on the street, every book you read to them. One of the teachers sits with each child is selecting their books in school, helping them develop their personal tastes in authors, stories. Support the activity at your end too. This is Homework in the best way- useful work for your child to continue at home, but it

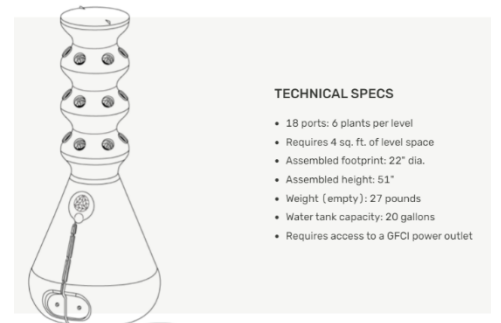
cannot happen without an adult making the time also.

Your child must return the books every week in order to choose a new set. Again, this is an adult responsibility; you are modeling responsible behaviors for them once again.



FOR SALE:

This amazing structure is a **hydroponic Farmstand from Lettuce Grow**. We have 2 of them in our Annex and that is really more than we can accommodate. Therefore I am selling off one of them. Cost was around \$650 2 years ago. You need to buy the grow lights from the company that fit in-between the rings. It works very well indoors and is easy to manage. Just plug it in; no separate water source needed. The company is extremely



- TECHNICAL SPECS**
- 18 ports: 6 plants per level
 - Requires 4 sq. ft. of level space
 - Assembled footprint: 22" dia.
 - Assembled height: 51"
 - Weight (empty): 27 pounds
 - Water tank capacity: 20 gallons
 - Requires access to a GFCI power outlet

helpful in getting it going. We will pack it up for you; sold to whoever makes the highest donation to the school. Imagine, strawberries and lettuce growing all winter right in your living room!

COMING UP:

- **PARENTING CIRCLE WITH LAURA MARTE** – this Thurs with our DOE social worker, Laura. She has already been very helpful to me and several families in managing some of the challenges of child-raising, system managing, and a good ear to listen. If you can, stop into the Annex at drop-off Thurs. Coffee will be hot and waiting.
- **FAMILY BREAKFASTS** – another Spuyten Duyvil ritual. While we don't "celebrate" calendar holidays in a traditional way, we do like to get together, and we certainly like to eat! Each class gets an hour first thing in the morning to have some breakfast treats together. We ask every family to please bring a small dish to share for our buffet spread. The school will supply paper goods, coffee and milk.
 - **3K Tues, Dec. 12 at 8:30**
 - **Margaret/Chassity Wed. Dec. 13 at 8:40**
 - **Alda/Michele Thurs Dec. 14 at 8:50**
- **SOMOS ARTISTAS** – last year's families will remember our teaming up with Dolores Zorreguieta, local artist and arts instructor. Between us we came up with a weekly visual arts program afterschool with the added twist of being completely **Spanish immersion!** Rather than me try to explain how magical it was to work with Dolores, check out her YouTube videos yourself.

https://youtu.be/_aP5ejFfmNY?si=-Uvv5c24gwRkeT_6

Dolores will start Monday afterschool on Jan. 8. All children already in aftercare on Mondays will attend either the 3:00 or 4:00 session for no extra cost. If your child is not already in aftercare and you would like to participate, the cost will be \$10/week. Just let me know.

- **MOVIE NITE**- more info in January but for now just mark your calendars Jan 19 at 6 pm (sorry, only 4K). We cuddle together by family, all in our PJ's, snug in our bedding, snacking on fresh popcorn, franks, chips, and watch a movie we have all decided on – make your suggestions now. There will be a second Movie Nite in March. SO FUN!



LAST NOTES:

- **SCHOOL PHOTOS**- went off perfectly. Teachers are giving out the proof pages this week. Families order directly from the company.
- **FLU SHOTS** – I have already started the nagging so please take note. Dept of Health mandates all children receive this season's flu shot by Dec. 31. If I don't have receipt or immunization proof by then, your child will not be allowed into school when we return from winter break on Jan. 2, 2024. Please don't let that happen, and help us keep everyone safe.
- I am still entering all the **enrollment paperwork**. I have already reached out to families where odds and ends are missing. Sorry for the bother but if it isn't all uploaded into the Dept of Ed system, our funding is affected.



- **URBAN EXPLORERS**- our pre-pre-kindergarten program will start up again Feb. 26. This is for children eligible for 3K next fall (born in 2021). Enrollment qualifies child to apply to our 3K as an existing student. Flyer attached. Spread the word to friends.

- **Mary's Movement/Dance classes – for adults too???** Mary started her Saturday schedule a few weeks ago and the numbers are building. Next set of classes in January are also going to include a slightly older age group of kids too. But why should the kids get all the good workouts? We were talking about starting an adult group here too if there was enough interest. We are looking at either Thurs evening from 6-7 and/or Saturday mornings from 8-9 before the kids start. You can let either of us know if you are interested in any of this or have questions. Mary's contact info is: **mecartales@gmail.com 917 887 9963**

Sincerely,

Judi

ARTICLE OF THE MONTH:

What Does Too Much Screen Time Do to Children's Brains? By Dr. Jennifer Cross

This is a regular theme for me every year- trying to get families to understand how dangerous ALL screen time is for young children. We could certainly make that argument for any age person, but your children do not have choice in what they are exposed to; they rely on you for that. I know I/we sound like old humbugs when we go on about how isolating, anti-social, brain damaging, physically restricting extensive screentime is for children, but there is a growing body of scientific work to back up with educators have always known. We are seeing more and more children with poor vocabulary, difficulty expressing themselves in full sentences, limited attention span, inability to pick out and remember details, not understanding complex questions, unable to follow multi-step directions, limited social negotiating skills, poor curiosity and question making about their world. Then there are physical side-effects- poor grasp in fingers, tire easily, poor coordination of large muscles, poor balance and inaccurate spatial orientation.

As if all this was not enough to break the screen kick, children with extensive screen time do less well academically in formal schooling ahead. Of course it doesn't help that traditional schools rely more and more on screens to deliver instruction, but that is someone else's argument to have.

There is no question that busy families need a break to get dinner on the table, take a shower in peace, stop siblings from arguing- and TV or iPad can do that very quickly, but be aware of the purpose and keep it short and limited. And there is NO SUCH THING AS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING. We are not talking about research extensions for higher grade projects or showing your kids some video of penguins in the wild during an Artic Animal study.

This topic has come often this school year, maybe even more than before. Years ago there was a wonderful article about the head guys in Silicone Valley (back in the Steve Jobs days) and how their children attend schools without computers, knowing that hands-on, authentic experiences is what teaches life-long learning skills; technology comes later when there is a specific purpose and the child is developmentally able to make appropriate judgments. The brain is also less vulnerable to the flashing lights and sounds. It doesn't matter if it is video games, Peppa Pig, or alphabet games.

I looked for an article that was not too technical, or dated, and also practical. Please take a read and let me know what you all think.

